

CRC QUERI AFFILIATES FORUM

PRESENTING THE AFFILIATE FORUM

We're excited to present the first issue of the CRC QUERI Affiliate Forum! Given the distance that separates us, we're hoping that this quarterly newsletter will improve communication and facilitate greater collaboration.

We will be emailing the Forum to all QUERI affiliated researchers on a quarterly basis. If you

have information that you would like to see included in the newsletter, please call Suzanne Leger at (612) 467-2785 or email her at Suzanne.Leger2@med.va.gov.

Look to the Forum for information on upcoming QUERI related events and news.

RESEARCH SEMINARS TO BE HELD QUARTERLY

All QUERI affiliates are invited to attend the QUERI research seminars, which will be held quarterly beginning May 2005. Each seminar will feature a presentation by a QUERI investigator. The first seminar will occur on Tuesday, May 24, 2005 at 2:00 - 3:30 PM EDT.

The purpose of the research seminars will be to disseminate information gleaned from completed projects or to provide a forum for investigators who are in the formative phases of a project to receive feedback. We expect that the atmosphere of the seminars will be informal and collegial. We'd like to hear from investigators who are interested in presenting the findings of their projects, or who would like to share ideas for future studies.



We are happy to have Greta Friedemann-Sanchez, PhD from the Minneapolis VAMC as the initial presenter in the seminar series. Greta will present "Gender Barriers to Colorectal Cancer Screening," based on the results of a study

that Greta and Joan Griffin, PhD conducted during Greta's post-doctoral fellowship.

Study subjects were 27 female and 43 male veterans between 50 and 75 who receive primary care at the Minneapolis VAMC. The participants consented to focus group interviews, with the groups being stratified by gender and screening status. Group interviews focused upon veterans' beliefs and attitudes about colorectal cancer screening.

The Research Seminar will be conducted via **HSR&D's** WebEx, which is a website devoted to hosting interactive group meetings. Using your computer you can see slides and type in questions to the presenter. VANTs lines provide two-way audio communication with the presenter. Watch for our email invitation coming out in May to participate in Dr. Friedemann-Sanchez's seminar.

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Publication and Project Information

Given the amount of work and last-minute rush that has been associated with completing the Strategic Plan each year, we'd like to obtain project and publication information in a timely, non-hurried manner.

You'll soon be receiving forms via email for you to use to tell us about your recent publications and pro-

ject. Forms will be returned to Suzanne Leger at the Minneapolis VAMC. Please feel free to contact Suzanne at (612)-467-2875 if you have any questions.

We look forward to reporting back what everyone has been up to in future editions of the Affiliate Forum. Thanks for your continued support!

QUERI Investigators Present at HSR&D National Meeting

Several CRC QUERI investigators conducted workshops and/or presented papers and/or posters at the 2005 Health Services Research and Development National Meeting which was held in Baltimore, MD from February 16 through 18.

Elizabeth Yano, PhD, of the VA Greater Los Angeles Health Care System, participated in a panel discus-



sion during the workshop, "Building the VA Business Case for Quality Improvement and Health Services Research." The workshop informed investigators of the importance of communicating the business case for quality improvement/health services research to health care managers, whose partnership

is vital to the implementation of evidence-based

projects, and yet whose motivations and needs significantly differ from those of health researchers.

Laura Kochevar, PhD, of the Minneapolis VAMC conducted a workshop entitled, "Advanced Implementation Research Issues."

Laura presented a model of "The Implementation Research Continuum" which consisted of various basic and applied research activities from health psychology, public health intervention studies, operations research, and health care organizational change literature.



Special attention was given to the 6-step QUERI process and to 4-phase models of clinical trial and implementation research.

Papers were presented by the following investigators:

- Nina Sayer, PhD; "Changes in Symptoms, Functioning, and Service Utilization After PTSD Claim Determinations"; Minneapolis VA Medical Center
- Diana Burgess, PhD; "What Do Practicing Providers Think About Racial/Ethnic Disparities in Healthcare?"; Minneapolis VA Medical Center
- M. Rosario Ferreira, MD; "Process Evaluation in an Intervention to Improve Colorectal Cancer Screening"; VA Chicago Health Care System

The following investigators presented posters:

- Lynn Soban, RN, MPH of the VA HSR&D Center for Excellence in Sepulveda California, "The Role of the Local Health Care Environment in VA Care: Does Managed Care Matter?"
- Greta Friedemann-Sanchez, PhD of the Minneapolis VAMC, "Research and Educational Implications on Colorectal Cancer Screening Perceptions."
- Elizabeth Yano, PhD of the VA Greater Los Angeles Health Care System, "Practice and Patient Level Factors Predicting Colorectal Cancer Screening Rates."



Breaking News!

Veteran Survey Funded

One of our major core research efforts, "Assessing and Addressing Patient Colorectal Cancer Screening Barriers," has been funded by VA HSR&D and is scheduled to begin in July 2005. Led by Melissa Partin, the project will survey a national sample of veterans to improve our understanding of how patient knowledge, attitudes, preferences and environmental support affect participation in colorectal cancer screening. Special attention will be given to understanding factors related to health disparities and gathering actionable information to support future screening promotion interventions.

GIVER Study Funded

Without appropriate diagnostic follow-up, screening for CRC affords us nothing. And yet, recent estimates indicate that more than half of veterans fail to receive timely diagnostic follow up (1). The mean time to colonoscopy following a positive fecal occult blood test has been estimated at 276 days (2).

While some of the performance gap is attributable to referral issues, much of the problem is associated with successful completion of scheduled exams. Issues include difficulty scheduling an appropriate time, no shows, late cancellations, difficulty with colon prep or other adherence with appointment requirements.

The GIVER study, funded by VA HSR&D, will examine whether we can alleviate these problems through educational and motivational messages delivered to patients via interactive voice response (IVR) telephony. GIVER, stands for Gastroenterology Interactive Voice Education and Reminders. Principal investigator Laura Kochevar has requested extra credit points for thinking up the acronym.

Patients will be randomized to receive usual care, scheduling facilitation and appointment reminders via IVR, or scheduling facilitation, appointment reminders and access to pre-recorded prep education and motivational messages. The program will begin in FY2006 and run for 2.5 years

(1)Etzioni et al, 'Colorectal Cancer Screening and Follow-up in the VHA' and (2) Fisher et al, 'Evaluation of a Positive Screening Fecal Occult Blood Test' both HSR&D 2004 National Meeting and under review for publication.

New Partnership Formed

CRC QUERI is working in close partnership with the Office of Quality and Performance (OQP), Advance Clinic Access (ACA), VISN, Nursing and Medical Center leadership on a new partnership entitled "The CRC Collaborative Quality Assessment and Improvement Pilot Project".

Details of the partnership are not yet final; a full report will be given in the next Affiliate Forum. What we do know is that lessons learned from two QUERI projects: the CRC Screening and Follow-up Event (CRC-SAFE) data system and the Cancer Care Outcomes Research and Surveillance System (CanCORS), are being transformed into performance monitoring and feedback programs for VA facilities.

As a rapid-response pilot demonstration we will be constructing performance profiles for 20 volunteer facilities. The profiles will cover key processes along the entire colorectal cancer care continuum from symptom presentation or screening through treatment. There will be both quantitative analysis of process intervals (such as time from positive screen to GI consult) and event rates (the percent of patients with positive screens referred for consult) and qualitative analysis of appropriateness of treatment.

You may have heard of this exciting partnership through the QMIC, ACA conferences or from your CMO. Project leads Dawn Provenzale and Laura Kochevar have been very busy with the partners, pulling together a quality program and sharing information with key stakeholders.